**The Openings of the *Iliad*, *Odyssey* and *Aeneid* in Comparison**

Tell me, Muse, the story of that resourceful man who was driven to wander far and wide after he had sacked the holy citadel of Troy. He saw the cities of many people and he learnt their ways. He suffered great anguish on the high seas in his struggles to preserve his life and bring his comrades home. But he failed to save those comrades in spite of all his efforts. It was their own transgressions that brought them to their doom, for in their folly they devoured the oxen of Hyperion the Sun-god and he saw to it that they would never return. Tell us this story, goddess daughter of Zeus, beginning at whatever point you will.

[*Odyssey* 1.1-11]

I sing of arms and of the man, fated by exile, who long since left the land of Troy and came to Italy to the shores of Lavinium; and a great pounding he took by land and sea at the hands of the heavenly gods because of the fierce and unforgetting anger of Juno. Great too were his sufferings in war before he could found his city and carry his gods into Latium. This was the beginning of the Latin race, the Alban fathers and the high walls of Rome. Tell me, Muse, the causes of her anger. How did he violate the will of the Queen of the Gods? What was his offense? Why did she drive a man famous for his piety to such endless hardship and such suffering? Can there be so much anger in the hearts of the heavenly gods?

[*Aeneid* 1.1-12]

Sing, goddess, of the anger of Achilles, son of Peleus, the accursed anger which brought uncounted anguish on the Achaians and hurled down to Hades many mighty souls of heroes, making their bodies the prey to dogs and the birds’ feasting: and this was the working of Zeus’ will. Sing from the time of the first quarrel which divided Atreus’ son, the lord of men, and godlike Achilles. Which of the gods was it who set these two to their fighting? It was the son of Zeus and Leto. In anger at the king he raised a vile plague throughout the army, and the people were dying because the son of Atreus had dishonoured Chryses, his priest.

[*Iliad* 1.1-10]